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was past; and the town of Berdera is probably only a collection of mat huts, the destruction of which would give the inhabitants no concern.

The PRESIDENT said that as this was the last occasion for some time on which they would have to discuss the river Juba, he might state that there was present in the room a Mr. Angelo, an Englishman, who a number of years ago ascended the river Juba. The fact of that ascent of the river was so perfectly unknown to him (the President) and his associates in geography, that they had said that the recent exploration was the first occasion on which the Juba was ascended by Europeans. A general Gazetteer, prepared by a member of the Royal Geographical Society, to which he (the President) had referred, mentioned the river Juba as having been ascended by Mr. Angelo, but the year was not stated. Mr. Angelo would communicate to the Meeting his recollections of the river.

Mr. ANGELO read passages from his journal describing the features of the river Juba and the country lying on its banks. His exploration was made in the year 1836. He stated that at that time Berdera was occupied by runaway slaves and the lower class of Somälis. His impression was that Baron von der Decken's murder must have been committed by the lower class of Somälis. He (Mr. Angelo) had always received the greatest hospitality from the Somälis of Berdera and the other towns on the Juba.


The PRESIDENT said that it would occupy too much of the time of the meeting to hear the whole of Mr. Angelo's journal read; but the Society would be very happy to profit from it by inserting it, with Mr. Angelo's permission, in a future number of their printed Proceedings.

2. *Englishmen in Captivity in Eastern Africa.* By COLONEL RIGBY.

At the last Meeting but one of the Royal Geographical Society it was stated that there is strong circumstantial evidence to show that several Englishmen have been for several years past kept in captivity by the Somäli tribes near Magdesho, on the East Coast of Africa. The circumstances connected with this subject are as follows:—

In the month of June, 1855, the British ship *St. Abbs*, from London to Bombay, struck upon the island of San Juan de Nuova. All the boats except one were swamped in launching. The remaining boat was taken by the captain, who deserted the ship with two of the crew, one a Belgian. They landed on the island, and made no attempt to render any assistance to those remaining on board. Two of the passengers, Mr. Ross and Mr. Bell, cadets in the Bombay army, jumped overboard to endeavour to swim ashore. Mr. Bell was drowned, Mr. Ross reached the shore in safety. The carpenter lowered his tools into the water in an empty cask, which reached the shore. He then swam ashore with one of the crew. The ship remained on the reef for some days, dismasted. At length, at daylight on the morning of the 14th of June, the ship had disappeared, and the persons on the reef naturally supposed that she had gone to pieces during the night. However, no bodies or por-

tions of wreck were washed up on the island; but brandy, champagne, and cases of preserved provisions were washed up, and proved very acceptable to the six survivors of the ship who were on this uninhabited island. It may be here remarked, that during the month of June the current sets with immense force to the north-west round the north end of Madagascar, and that the night the ship disappeared was the highest flood-tide during the month.

It afterwards became known that the hull of the *St. Abbs* had not gone to pieces on the island of Juan de Nuova as was supposed, but had been swept up by the current to the coast of Africa near Magdesho, where she was boarded by the natives, who possessed themselves of everything on board. A great many articles known to have been on board the *St. Abbs* were afterwards brought to Zanzibar and disposed of by natives of Magdesho. The *St. Abbs* was taking out Government stores, and amongst the articles brought for sale were Light Infantry bugles, cases of surgical instruments &c., all containing the Government mark thus ; also boxes of books, ivory billiard-balls (the *St. Abbs* was taking out several billiard-tables), surveying-instruments, officers' epaulettes, &c. As the wreck occurred at the season when vessels all go north from the East Coast of Africa, most of the articles recovered were conveyed to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to be disposed of, and only those articles for which there was no sale in native markets were brought to Zanzibar to be disposed of amongst the European residents.

At the time the hull of the *St. Abbs* disappeared, twenty-six persons remained on board; viz., twenty-two officers and crew of the ship and four young gentlemen passengers. Nothing was heard of these until about four years had elapsed, when reports reached Ceylon and the Mauritius that a number of Englishmen were in captivity somewhere on the East Coast of Africa. The Governor of the Mauritius caused proclamations to be published in French and English offering a reward of five hundred dollars for every white man rescued, and forwarded copies with a letter to the British Consul at Zanzibar. From inquiries made by Colonel Rigby at Zanzibar, he found that there were very strong grounds for believing that the reports made to the Government of Mauritius were well founded, and that when the hull of the *St. Abbs* washed ashore near Magdesho the persons on board were captured by the Abghal Somālis, and carried into the interior.

Colonel Rigby at that time could not understand how the reports of Europeans being in captivity had reached Ceylon and Mauritius, when nothing on the subject was previously known at Zanzibar. But this was afterwards explained in a somewhat remarkable

manner. On questioning a very intelligent Somāli inhabitant of Magdesho as to whether he knew anything of any white men being in captivity, he replied, "Yes, and I'll tell you how the information reached the Government, viz., as follows:—Some time after the Englishmen were captured, a caravan of pilgrims to Mecca went overland from Magdesho to Zeyla, and passed a place where they saw several white men in captivity. On arriving at Jeddah they found that the English Consul and all the Christians had been murdered, and they were consequently unable to report the circumstances, but they mentioned them to pilgrims from Ceylon and Mauritius, in the hope that through them information would be conveyed to the British Government. From information obtained by Colonel Rigby at Zanzibar, there appears no doubt that the survivors of the *St. Abbs* were divided into two parties; one of which was taken a long distance into the interior, and the other, consisting of three persons, is kept by the Abghal tribe of Somālis not far from Magdesho. Attention has recently been called to this subject from the circumstance that a bullock's hide brought from Magdesho to Zanzibar, which had been purchased from a caravan of Somālis just arrived from the interior, was found to have several English letters carved on it. The man who had purchased the hide put it aside and on his arrival at Zanzibar took it to Messrs. Oswald and Sons, who gave it to Colonel Playfair, the British Consul; he further stated that he had seen other hides with letters cut on them. Now these letters were, no doubt, carved by one of the captives, perhaps in the faint hope of their meeting the eye of some European.

The part of Africa inhabited by these Somāli tribes is very salubrious and very fertile. The natives possess large herds of cattle, and the skins are brought for sale to Zanzibar.

There is communication with this part from Zeyla and Berbera in the Gulf of Aden. The Ogahden caravan to the great annual fair at Berbera traverses a great part of this country to the banks of the great river, called the "Wabbe Shabeli," which flows near Magdesho and Brava. The Resident at Aden might induce some of the Ogahden (or Woghadeen) tribe of Somālis to rescue these captives, or at least to bring information as to where they are residing. Inquiries should also be made at Brava and Magdesho on the East Coast.

A very respectable native of Magdesho, named "Hajee Noor," informed Colonel Rigby that he had been on board the vessel which came ashore at Magdesho, and, in confirmation of this, showed him some English iron saucepans which he said he had taken from it.

On being told of the reward offered for any of the captives recovered, he started by land to go to Magadesho (without receiving anything in advance, being told that his reward depended entirely on his success) to rescue them. On arriving at Lamoo, the Governor finding on him the proclamations, seized and imprisoned him, and, owing to the difficulty of communication at that season, he was seven months in confinement before information reached the Consul at Zanzibar. But it is not at all likely that Hajee Noor would have undertaken this long and perilous journey entirely at his own cost, had he not good reason for believing that he would be successful in rescuing the captives, and thus earning the promised reward.

Colonel RIGBY, after reading his Paper, added that he had that day seen for the first time the owner of the *St. Abbs*, and had received information from him which gave a strong confirmation to the reports stated in the Paper. Amongst the things brought to Zanzibar, as taken from the wreck of an English ship, were several Masonic ornaments—an apron, diploma, &c., some billiard-balls, astronomical instruments, surgical instruments, and books. The statement of the owner of the *St. Abbs* showed that these articles corresponded to articles known to have been on board that vessel. These circumstances showed the probability that either the hull of the vessel was washed ashore entire, or that part of the vessel did so, and therefore that the twenty-two Englishmen who were missing reached the coast of Africa alive. They had probably been in a state of captivity in that country for the last ten years. The object of alluding to this matter was the hope of inducing some measures for the rescue of these unfortunate persons, if they were still in existence.

The PRESIDENT said it would be a very easy thing to ascertain, by offering rewards, whether any of these fine young men, thus unhappily lost to their friends and countrymen, could be recovered. The parents of many of them were still living in expectation of seeing their sons again, and he sincerely hoped that Her Majesty's Government would take some active steps in the matter; there surely never could be a more worthy occasion than this for asking assistance from them.

3. *Notes on the Niger.* By T. VALENTINE ROBINS, F.R.G.S.

MR. ROBINS resided at the settlement of Lukoja, on the Niger, from September, 1864, to October 1865, having been left there by Lieut. Knowles, commander of H.M.S.S. *Investigator*, to assist Lieut. Bourcier, the successor of Dr. Baikie,* founder of the settlement. The *Investigator* entered the mouth of the river, August 30th. For many miles the Niger is described as very picturesque, subdivided into innumerable creeks, and varied with islands covered with a magnificent tropical vegetation, growing apparently out of the water.

* See 'Proceedings,' vol. ix. p. 74.